



PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF
PRESIDENT ROH TAE WOO OF KOREA
CANBERRA - 8 NOVEMBER 1988**

Mr President,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with very great pleasure, Mr President, that we welcome you, your wife, and your distinguished party to Australia.

This is only the second occasion on which Australia has received a visit from the President of the Republic of Korea. I note with pride, Mr President, that with the exception of your visit to New York to address the United Nations General Assembly last month, this is your first overseas visit as President.

Coming as it does in our Bicentennial year - a year of special celebration for all Australians - this visit is an important symbol of the increasingly constructive and friendly relationship between Australia and Korea.

And of course more specifically we see your visit as an opportunity to congratulate you in person, and through you all the people of the Republic of Korea, for the magnificent way in which you staged the Games of the 24th Olympiad.

The success of the Games was due to the excellent facilities and organisational arrangements provided by Seoul and the other cities that staged Olympic events, and to the friendly welcome extended by Koreans to athletes and visitors from virtually every part of the globe.

The Games brought the Republic of Korea and its people into the homes of millions of Australians.

Korean athletes performed outstandingly well, winning a total of 33 medals. We congratulate you for that success.

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One of the highlights of the Games, at least for Australians, was undoubtedly the extraordinarily keen competition between the Australian and Korean women's hockey players. I know, Mr President, that you were a spectator at the final, so you will appreciate the pride we feel at having won the gold medal.

We are delighted to have in our company today many of the members of that women's hockey team, along with some of our other Olympic medallists : Grant Davies, Grahame Cheney, Brett Dutton, Wayne McCarney, Scott McGrory, Julie McDonald, Peter Foster and Kelvin Graham.

Also here as our guests are four very special athletes : Russell Short, Deahne McIntyre, Mathew Pobjie and Judy Young, all from the Canberra district, who took part in the very successful Paralympics Games in Seoul. Our disabled Australian athletes showed a high level of courage, skill and perseverance of which we are proud.

Mr President,

Your successful hosting of the Olympic Games was the dramatic culmination of two important long term trends that have characterised the history of the Republic of Korea. Your successful economic reconstruction following the devastation of the Korean War laid the foundations for a rapid growth of national prosperity. And your more recent political reforms hold the promise of a steady growth towards democracy.

Australia is deeply interested in and supportive of both these developments.

Australia was at the forefront of efforts, through the United Nations, to defend the security and independence of the people of the Republic of Korea, when they came under direct attack during the Korean war. As you would have seen this morning at the Australian War Memorial, Mr President, we still honour the 339 Australians who gave their lives during that tragic war.

That sacrifice reflects the extent of the stake we in Australia have in the encouragement of democratic development in your country.

So we have followed with great interest, Mr President, the events that have taken place since your commitment of June 1987 to revise your Constitution and to hold direct, presidential elections. We were encouraged by the amnesty you declared in February and the elections for the National Assembly held in April.

We also welcome your three-faceted foreign policy which encourages peaceful reunification with North Korea, the establishment of relations with socialist countries and the consolidation of relations with your traditional democratic allies, including Australia.

All this suggests that a new page is opening in the political history of the Republic. In you, Mr President, we recognise a leader of courage and vision who has embarked on a difficult, but fundamentally important, task. We wish you well and we offer you our support and encouragement.

Mr President,

The recent growth in democracy and human rights in your country follows several decades of rapidly improving living standards within a growing economy.

There is great cause for optimism that the processes which have led to the economic transformation of the Republic of Korea to an industrialised nation with a favourable balance of payments will continue. We hope, in particular, that economic links between our two countries will continue to grow and diversify to our mutual benefit.

Australia and the Republic of Korea lie at the northern and the southern edges of the Pacific Rim - the most economically dynamic region of the world.

Total trade between us is worth nearly \$3 billion and Australia and Korea are among each other's top ten trading partners.

In different ways both of us are pursuing structural adjustment for the long term benefit of our respective economies and, in particular, through the creation of increased trade and economic opportunities. In this regard we would urge you to take up the challenge of agricultural reform and work towards a program of full agricultural market liberalisation.

You will know, Mr President, that we have a special interest in the beef market, and in this regard the July announcement of a limited re-opening of your market was a step in the right direction. I hope you will be able to build on that progress.

Our interest in the relationship, and our confidence in its future, has prompted us to see what initiatives we can take to sustain and diversify it further.

We have recently announced a trade and commercial development program, aimed at diversifying Australian trade into Korea and maximising the opportunities for Australian firms to participate in trade, investment and industrial, scientific and technological co-operation. We also wish to encourage a greater Korean commercial interest in Australia.

To stimulate business and tourist traffic further we have agreed to negotiate a Government-to-Government Air Services Agreement which will permit direct air links between Korea and Australia.

The growth and the prosperity of both our countries depend crucially on the maintenance and enhancement of the multilateral trading system. It was pleasing to note Korean participation in a meeting of senior trade officials in Wellington in September as part of a regional consultative process I initiated in 1983.

It is to be hoped the December Mid-term Review of the Uruguay Round can lay the groundwork for a successful completion of the Round as well as achieving substantive progress and reform in areas such as agriculture.

Mr President,

Until recently, economic matters have tended to dominate our relationship. It is important to remember, however, that we also have much to offer each other in cultural, social and educational areas.

For our part we would welcome further Parliamentary exchanges and visits by Korean academics and cultural groups.

In our talks on Monday we agreed to a Forum symposium on Australia-Korea relations, with the objective of stimulating some creative thinking on how the relationship might be developed. An important further step to broaden and strengthen the relationship was taken when our Foreign Ministers Senator Evans and Mr Choi signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Science and Technology which will provide a significant boost to our co-operation in these fields.

We still have more to do to add content to the cultural agreement between Australia and Korea. In this regard, we warmly welcome your suggestion to convene a Joint Cultural Commission to discuss a forward plan of cultural activities, and expand the scope of existing cultural and academic exchanges.

Mr President,

The relationship between Australia and Korea is newly developed, and it still requires many dimensions before it reaches maturity. But we have come a long way in a short period of time, and my own visit to your country in 1984 and your visit here at this time have done much, and will do much, to increase mutual understanding and identify the whole agenda of common interests that we share.

Let me wish you a successful and fruitful time for the remainder of your current tour, and further progressive achievements during your Presidency.
